

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 739

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Rodney Whaley for being the first Tennessean to compete in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Rodney Whaley, who is the first Tennessean to compete in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Alaska, which begins this year on March 1, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Iditarod, run annually for the last thirty-five years and known as "The World's Last Great Race," is a grueling, two-week-long test of endurance that requires the musher and sled dogs to traverse 1,112 miles of frozen rivers, jagged mountain ranges, dense forests, desolate tundra, and Bering Sea coastline through such treacherous Alaskan weather conditions as subzero temperatures, blinding snowstorms, and severe winds; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Whaley, a twenty-four year veteran of the United States Army National Guard and longtime resident of Franklin, has had a lifelong passion for sled racing and dogs, and has participated in sled dog competitions since an early age in many locations, including British Columbia, Washington, and Michigan; and

WHEREAS, Rodney Whaley and his team of sixteen dogs, sponsored by the United States Army National Guard, became one of 114 teams from across the globe to qualify for the heralded race by successfully completing two sanctioned races of several hundred miles each. Spurred by his unswerving commitment and drive to excel, he dedicated himself to full-time training in northern climes in October of 2007; and

WHEREAS, Musher Whaley will lead the accomplished dogs of the 2008 National Guard Iditarod Team, composed of Christmas, Marais, Mac, Curtis, Dozer, Cricket, Leeda, Equis, Fairbanks, Olive, Sammy, Owl, Orca, Polar, Buck, and Whiskey; and

WHEREAS, Rodney Whaley, his many sled dog racing accomplishments aside, is perhaps most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Vicki; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Whaley epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Rodney Whaley's participation in the 2008 Iditarod Race is not only a first for this State but also a source of great pride for all the members of this Body and is wholly deserving of recognition; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Rodney Whaley for being the first Tennessean to compete in the historic Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, and we extend to him our best wishes for his safety and security, and the safety of his dogs, during their running of the world's toughest race.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.